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An economy still on the rise

BOOMING

Vancouver is the fastest growing economy in Canada

Jason Menard

Last year, Vancouver created more jobs than anywhere else in Canada. ISTOCK

Vancouver has been a shining star in the Canadian economy for years and the future looks just as bright, explained James Raymond, manager of research and analysis for the Vancouver Economic Commission.

"Vancouver is the fastest growing economy in Canada, growing at 3.9 per cent and far outpacing everywhere else," Raymond said. "Last year, Vancouver created more jobs than anywhere else in Canada. The Conference Board forecasts that Vancouver will be the fastest growing until 2020. It also found Vancouver to be the most diverse economy in Canada.

"As a result, we are extremely optimistic about the position Vancouver's economy is in."

Last year, Vancouver created 94,000 jobs, Raymond explained. Toronto created 90,000 and the rest of Canada created 41,000.

Vancouver's growth has been sustained for a few years and is expected to continue to be sustainable for the foreseeable future, he said.

"Five years ago, we were growing just as fast [3.8 per cent in 2010], but were not number one due to the boom seen in other economies such as Calgary and Saskatoon, due to high commodity prices," he said. "Now that oil prices have declined, Vancouver is showing that a diverse economy is smart economic policy."

The VEC supports the fastest-growing, highest potential sectors of Vancouver's economy, Raymond explained, listing technology; digital entertainment and interactive; and the green economy, which includes clean tech, green buildings and local food, amongst others.

"These are the most exciting sectors for the community as they are rapidly transitioning our economy to a high knowledge, high creativity and low carbon economy," he said. "These sectors are providing the innovative, fun, high paying and impactful jobs that our citizens — particularly millennials — want.

"A great example of this is the VR/AR subsector where Vancouver is lucky to have some brilliant companies and growing expertise."

There are also some notable growth opportunities presenting themselves in other key market verticals, in which Vancouver is well positioned.

"Just last year, the number of film and TV projects in the City of Vancouver grew 40 per cent — the industry is really booming," Raymond said. "Our other sectors see similar growth levels. Green jobs are increasing six per cent each year. The ICTC forecast another 15,000 tech jobs in Vancouver by 2020 based on current growth trends."

In addition, social enterprise is showing that it's an attractive destination for job seekers looking to make a difference.

The other huge growth opportunity lies within 'Impact' businesses. "We just had 600 job seekers line up for Vancouver's first ever 'Impact Career Fair' as part of our Startup City Impact Week programming," he said. "Vancouverites want to work for companies that are positively changing the world."

Raymond is confident about the future for the city.

"In five years' time, Vancouver will still be the fastest growing, and most diverse, in Canada; in five years' time, Vancouver will be the greenest city in the world — it is currently ranked third by The Economist," he said. "I think we will observe Vancouver take an even more prominent spot on the world stage. Just recently, representatives from the World Economic Forum were visiting some of our coolest, most innovative companies. We were also front and centre at the Paris COP21 talks due to our leadership on climate change.

"Simply put, Vancouver will be known as not just a beautiful place, but a place of incredible ideas, creativity and talent."

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Green economy can power city to the top

GREEN CITY

Business community embracing environmentalism

Jason Menard

When we think of the word 'economy,' the only thing green we have historically focused on is money. But Vancouver is proving that environmentalism and economics can not only mix, but push the city to the top of the global market.

"We credit Vancouver's status as one of the world's greenest cities to its leadership, public engagement, strategic processes, levers and tools," explained Bryan Buggey, director of sustainable initiatives and sector development, for the Vancouver Economic Commission.

"Our award-winning Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) is the culmination of collaboration between top levels of municipal government, the 100 subject experts and 35,000 members of the public consulted. Since 2011, City of Vancouver staff has worked in partnership with the Vancouver community to achieve goals in the 10 areas of action outlined in the GCAP."

However, Buggey notes the city hasn't done this on its own.

"The City of Vancouver government does not have the power, resources, or even jurisdiction to achieve the bold goals in the strategy alone," he said.

"While the city has tremendous influence, we rely on partnerships and cooperation with other levels of government, numerous sectors, and the public to see them to completion."

Part of that support comes in the form of local businesses that see the value in staff satisfaction and retention.

"The business community embraces the green economy. Their staff wants healthier and safer environments to work in, and the Greenest City Action Plan delivers on that with cleaner air, cleaner water, greener buildings and greener transportation," Buggey explained. "All of these contribute to Vancouver's outstanding quality of life and makes Vancouver exceptionally attractive to talent."

But none of this would have as great of an impact if it wasn't for citizens who show their support with their consumer dollars.

"Consumers are voting with their wallets for greener, ethically sourced products," explained James Raymond, manager of research and analysis for the Vancouver Economic Commission."As consumers increasingly value green goods, businesses move to deliver on that demand.

Consumers are voting with their wallets for greener, ethically sourced products. JENNIFER GAUTHIER

WHAT'S A GREEN ECONOMY?

Vancouver's green economy consists of seven subsectors:

- Local food
- Green building design and construction
- Clean technology, alternative energy, and green building products
- Green infrastructure, transportation and planning
- Sustainability services and education
- Land and water remediation and environmental consulting
- Materials management and recycling

Currently 25 per cent of Canada's clean tech companies are in Vancouver and local food jobs have increased by 21 per cent since 2010. Local food represents the largest subsector of Vancouver's green economy, with local farmers' markets alone providing $15 million of benefit to the local economy.

In 2010, Vancouver had 16,700 green and local food jobs; by 2013 that number jumped to 20,000 (a 19 per cent increase), a number that represents 4.9 per cent of all jobs in Vancouver.

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As condo developments go up, so too do Vancouver's housing prices. JENNIFER GAUTHIER

The housing market keeps up momentum

INVITING THE WORLD

'I've been a realtor for 25 years and I've never seen anything sustain this long'

Jason Menard

The Vancouver housing market is the stuff of legends — but how it got to where it is is simply a matter of supply and demand, combined with the fact that Vancouver is one of the most attractive destinations in the world.

Residential property sales, according to the region's Multiple Listing Service, totalled 4,769 this May, an increase of 17.6 per cent from May 2015.

"Vancouver has done an amazing job of inviting the world — and they've come!" explained Dan Morrison, president of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. "We have the hottest economy in the country, amazing job growth, and we've had immigration from outside of the country and migration from other parts of the country."

And, in terms of housing prices, things don't seem to be slowing down. Morrison explained the housing market started taking off in 2015 and continues to rise.

"We keep hitting record number of sales and while it feels like the rate of price increase is slowing down, it's still going up," he said. "May was our highest May on record and March was our highest month on record ever.

"I've been a realtor for 25 years and I've never seen anything sustain this long."

Space is at a premium in a city surrounded by water and mountains. That's why Vancouver is seeing more inward and upward growth with condo developments. With that comes the reduction of prized inventory — the single-family home.

"The hot product that everyone would love to have is a single-family home near downtown, but there are fewer today than ever," Morrison explained.

"Single-family homes are getting knocked down and condos are going up. You have more people looking for less product and that impacts the price."

Compounding the lack of homes is the fact that those that could be made available aren't coming on the market.

"There's a huge demographic of people with mortgage-free properties sitting on these homes," he added. "Some may like to downsize, but the products that are being built aren't meeting their needs."

Though we often hear about astronomical housing prices — and Morrison said he laments the media reports of bungalows selling into the millions ("It's not the house that's worth that. It's the land. It's sitting in arguably the hottest neighbourhood in the world,") — there are affordable options for people looking to buy.

Whether it is townhomes, condos, or even single-family homes a little farther afield, there are options. But buyers need to manage their expectations, Morrison said.

"There are lots of affordable products available, but they're just not downtown. People have to change their expectations."

Morrison doesn't expect prices to come down, but there may be a softening in growth that help salaries catch up to prices. So, in the interim, how do you find the right home for an affordable price in Vancouver?

"Call a realtor and talk about areas that would work for you and options that may be affordable for you. Go past the headline and do the research."

NEW FACILITY

A welcome home to arriving refugees

After months spent working feverishly to resettle a wave of refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria, the Immigrant Services Society of B.C. has hit a long-awaited milestone.

On Saturday, ISSofBC will formally open its new Welcome Centre at 2610 Victoria Dr., a fully integrated, 138-bed facility offering a variety of services to newly arrived refugees and immigrants.

"We've been working on this building concept for many years," said Patricia Woroch, CEO of ISSofBC. "The concept is key: to have a multi-purpose facility that addresses our mission, which is, 'helping immigrants build a future in Canada.'"

While Woroch says the facility will benefit all newcomers to Metro Vancouver, public focus on refugee resettlement has been especially sharp in recent months, as about 1,600 government-sponsored Syrian refugees arrived in the city.

"The Syrian refugees posed a particular challenge because of the sheer numbers and rapid relocation from camp to Canada," said Woroch. "The demands on limited resources were staggering. However, we rose to the occasion and continue to work with the newest of Canadians in our usual manner."

An additional group of about 1,300 refugees is expected in Metro Vancouver this autumn, many of whom will likely make use of what the Welcome Centre has to offer, including transitional housing, language training and employment services.

And while the dueling responsibilities of resettling newcomers and completing the Welcome Centre have stretched ISSofBC in recent months, Woroch says the organization has been buoyed by support from the community at large.

"We have been overwhelmed by the kindness and support we've received," she said. "This is a special community in that it is vibrant, diverse and inclusive.

"From welcome cards sent by community groups to offers of any number of kindnesses, we have this wonderful sense of 'coming home'."

Now, the focus shifts to providing a similar sense of homecoming to the thousands of newcomers who'll arrive in Metro Vancouver over the next year. Woroch acknowledges that integration can be difficult for refugees; but she is hopeful that with 44 years of experience and its brand-new Welcome Centre ready to go, ISSofBC is in a prime position to help Syrian refugees — and all new arrivals — make the most of their new lives in Canada. **DANIEL SQUIZZATO**

ISSofBC will open its new facility on Saturday. JENNIFER GAUTHIER

The path to the Arbutus Greenway

GREEN DESTINATION

After a 20-year wait, city will transform former rail line

Daniel Squizzato

The City of Vancouver has walked a long and winding path to get the Arbutus Corridor to where it is — and now, that path is set to become much more beautiful.

For 20 years, the city has been looking to transform the 42-acre, nine-kilometre former railway line, which runs from False Creek to the Fraser River.

Finally, in March, a deal was struck to purchase the corridor from CP Rail for $55 million, with designs for creating the long-awaited Arbutus Greenway.

Earlier this month, Mayor Gregor Robertson presided over the ceremonial removal of the first rail spike, and crews are now working to remove rails and ties, and install a temporary asphalt pathway for walking and cycling, expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

Meantime, the city will establish its Arbutus Greenway project team (targeted for completion in September) and embark on the process of planning the greenway's long-term future.

"The future Arbutus Greenway will connect people and neighbourhoods from False Creek to the Fraser River," said Jerry Dobrovolny, the city's general manager of engineering services.

"We expect it will become an attractive destination for locals and visitors alike, not unlike New York City's High Line."

The High Line is an abandoned stretch of elevated rail in Manhattan that was transformed into public space, opening in 2009. Its success provides a glimpse into what the Arbutus Greenway could become.

"There will be opportunities to incorporate parks, green space, art installations, and other cultural features," added Dobrovolny.

"It will also open up new service-economy opportunities, such as cafes and restaurants, and connect with other key transportation routes, such as the planned Broadway subway."

Residents will have their chance to weigh in on the greenway's future. The city plans to hold informal "pop-up" style events along the route this summer, giving people a chance to ask questions and offer feedback. The formal consultation process will begin in the fall, followed by an extensive planning process.

The city will present its Arbutus Greenway plans and seek further feedback before putting the plan into action. In all, Dobrovolny estimates this will take about 18 months.

Though it remains to be seen what the greenway will look like when all is said and done, what's clear is that the focus is now on the future of the corridor, rather than its past.

Dobrovolny said: "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform the lands into an active transportation space."

> **This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform the lands into an active transportation space.**
>
> Jerry Dobrovolny, the city's general manager of engineering services

An artist rendering of the Arbutus Greenway. CITY OF VANCOUVER

Municipal elections are faring well. Turnout increased to 43 per cent in 2014 , up from 35 per cent in 2011. EMILY JACKSON

ELECTIONS

Task force aims to get people to the polls

Why do some people vote while others stay at home?

As voter turnout goes, the City of Vancouver's municipal elections are doing pretty well. Voter turnout increased to 43 per cent in 2014, up from 35 per cent in 2011.

But there are major changes that still need to happen to get more people to the polls, according to Vancouver Coun. Andrea Reimer.

As of June 2, the city has a team working to meet this need: Vancouver's first Independent Election Task Force. A nominations committee from Vancouver city council selected the 12-person committee from a pool of applicants.

The group will provide independent recommendations to the province to improve the civic elections process. It's comprised of a diverse set of Vancouverites including a former chair of Fair Vote Canada, the president of Fair Voting BC, and the co-founder of Unlock Democracy.

Provincial and federal elections are overseen by independent organizations, Elections BC and Elections Canada, respectively.

But until now, Vancouver didn't have an independent elections office. Because of this, there is a backlog of reforms to the civic election process that many people feel need to be made, says Reimer.

The ultimate goal? To increase voter turnout to 60 per cent by 2025 and help Vancouverites become more directly engaged in elections and shaping the policies in their city.

"People are very anxious to get engaged in decision making in their community," said Reimer. "What they don't understand is how they can do that in a way that's relevant to their modern lives."

The task force will spend much of 2016 deciphering how the city can get more Vancouverites involved and out to vote.

Part of this process will be researching election best practices from around the world, and examine how information about elections and candidates can be communicated most effectively.

Other tactics the task force will look at may include how advance polling is provided, an option already explored successfully during the last civic election. Online polling is another option the task force will be looking into.

The task force will also examine the experience of those who are running for office, and will interview candidates from the last election for feedback on how their experience could have been better. Improving the process involved in running for office will give citizens more opportunities to participate in democracy.

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Vancouver to tax empty homes

AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Province's co-operation not needed, says mayor

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

One way or another, Vancouver will begin to tax empty homes during the city's affordability crisis.

Mayor Gregor Robertson announced Wednesday that the city will be once again asking the provincial government to implement a residential vacancy tax on the more than 10,000 homes currently being left empty for more than a year.

But the city is also prepared to go it alone, Robertson said, and implement a business tax on vacant properties if there's no reply from Premier Christy Clark by Aug. 1.

"I'm confirming that the city will take action on taxing empty homes with or without the help of the B.C. government," Robertson pledged during a press conference in Coal Harbour. "We're advancing the next piece, a residential vacancy tax, that we'd be working with the provincial government on as the quickest way to get more housing in the rental market."

More than half of Vancouver residents are renters, but the market is notoriously tough.

Not only have home prices surged 37 per cent in the last year, rental vacancy rates are at 0.6 per cent, which is considered unsustainable.

"Vancouver is without question in an affordability crisis," said Robertson. "(Prices and low vacancy rates) have impact on pushing Vancouverites, especially young people and families who are struggling to find housing, out of our neighbourhoods. We know that during this affordability crunch, there are over 10,000 empty homes year-round in the city.... Those would add a badly needed supply to our rental stock if we could make them available."

Shortly after the announcement, Clark tweeted her thanks to the city for its "thoughtful work on housing vacancy."

"We are reviewing your report and will respond quickly," the premier wrote.

If even just 2,000 more rental units were added to the city's stock, the vacancy rate would hit a "healthy" level of three per cent, according to Vancouver general manager of community services Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas.

Despite Robertson's commitment, it's not clear how a city-enforced business tax on empty homes would actually be implemented.

The city hopes to obtain primary residence and rental data from the province and has yet to settle on a rate, or much else.

"There are going to be all kinds of scenarios that we're going to have to ask ourselves," said Llewellyn-Thomas. "We haven't worked out all those details, and hopefully we can access all the data that the province has if we proceed. And there are other agencies that have information as well whether something is truly vacant."

Llewellyn-Thomas is not aware of any other city that already taxes empty homes.

In fact, "municipalities have already been writing to Mayor Robertson to ask him how we're going to be doing this," she said.

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Your essential daily news

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Swastika graffiti on LGBTQ centre 'brought us together'

VANDALISM

Symbol was quickly wiped away by a neighbour

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

A Vancouver LGBTQ events organizer says his community isn't intimidated by hate-inspired vandalism that appeared on Vancouver Arts and Leisure Centre's door in the wake of the Orlando gay bar massacre last week.

But Matt Troy, creative director of the centre on Main Street, said the swastika graffiti that defaced the organization's front door last Tuesday has sparked outpourings of support and solidarity over the past week — and opened some people's eyes.

"It's brought us together," Troy told Metro in a phone interview. "The response has been really productive.

"It's really opened a dialogue into how we are global citizens in relation to the struggles of people from Orlando and anywhere there is homophobia."

A friend sent Troy a photograph of the vandalism, but by the time he arrived at his workplace the swastika had been erased by an unexpected ally: a mechanic, he said, from a diesel repair shop across the street.

"One of our neighbours, a business across the street, saw it and scrubbed it off," he said. "It was removed so quickly.

"People have come forward to show their support and have expressed to us personally how important they feel our space is — the everyday story we're creating as LGBTQ people, as event planners, and as cultural organizers."

Troy said he has no doubt the swastika graffiti was hateful, but that even if it was a random incident, "the effect is not."

The Criminal Code allows people convicted of a crime to receive increased sentences "if there is evidence that a bias-, prejudice-, or hate-motivated offence has been committed," according to the Vancouver Police Department website.

"If somebody put a swastika on a synagogue, would it be random? No, it wouldn't," Troy said. "(Nazis killed) gays, lesbians, trans people — anyone deemed not to be their idea of what they wanted.

"I don't think it was random, because it was on our door and because of the work we do with the LGBTQ population as well as our staff members being a majority gay and lesbian."

> **It's really opened a dialogue into how we are global citizens in relation to the struggles of people from Orlando.** Matt Troy

Matt Troy creative director of the Vancouver Arts and Leisure Centre in Vancouver. CONTRIBUTED

Nonetheless, Troy has spent the week mulling over his decision not to involve the police, a decision he admitted "dismayed" some in the LGBTQ community.

"Maybe I should have," he said. "It was already removed and I just wanted to move on."

The swastika that was spray painted on the Vancouver Arts And Leisure Centre.
CONTRIBUTED

He said that the message of community solidarity and support is what he carries forward after an incident he described as a "petty, small act by a small person."

But no matter how small or one-off such vandalism might seem, he said, it underscores the importance of speaking out loudly against hate or discrimination against any group.

"I think being silent or ignoring it is akin to going back into the closet," Troy said.

"That's exactly what they would want — for us to shut up, be quiet, not express ourselves, and think twice before we be who we are. I don't want to see our amazing city to regress into a state of secrecy or fear."

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ECOLOGY

Sea star cataclysm causing further chaos

The mass death of sea stars in British Columbia's Howe Sound has created a trickle-down effect that a researcher says should be a warning about the depletion of any species in the ocean.

Sea stars began dying by the millions in waters from Alaska to Mexico in the summer of 2013.

Experts still don't have a conclusive cause but have linked some deaths to a virus and others to fluctuating water temperatures, said Jessica Schultz, a master's student at Simon Fraser University and the Vancouver Aquarium's Howe Sound research program manager.

"It's difficult to prevent further disturbances like this when you don't fully understand what the cause was," she said Wednesday.

Schultz and fellow marine ecologists Ryan Cloutier and Isabelle Cote from Simon Fraser discovered that the deaths in Howe Sound, just north of Vancouver, triggered a rapid rise in the number of green sea urchins and a depletion of the kelp they eat.

The sunflower star, one of the starfish most affected by the wasting disease, was a voracious predator of the urchins. At the same time, kelp has declined by 80 per cent.

"It's a stark reminder that everything is connected to everything else. In this case, the knock-on consequences were predictable, but sometimes they are not," Cote said in a news release.

Schultz said there is still no sign of recovery for Howe Sound's sea stars. In fact, they are still dying.

There has been talk of listing some of the starfish as endangered, she said, including the sunflower sea star, among the largest sea stars in the world.

The loss of that predator put things out of whack, Schultz said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Author Steven Galloway is no longer employed by the University of British Columbia. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Galloway gone from university

INVESTIGATION

Woman grateful UBC acted over the 'irreparable breach of trust'

A woman who complained to the University of British Columbia about the chair of its writing program says she's glad the acclaimed writer is no longer employed by the school.

The university issued a statement Wednesday saying Steven Galloway no longer works there over what it calls an "irreparable breach of trust."

"I'm so relieved that UBC did the right thing," said the woman, who asked that her name not be used out of concern for the impact it may have on her career.

She declined to discuss what led her to complain but said she has been living with extreme stress and anxiety as the investigation progressed.

"This has been the worst year of my life," she said.

Galloway was suspended in November while an investigation was completed over what UBC said were serious allegations of misconduct.

Additional complaints were received after he was suspended. Mary Ellen Boyd, a former B.C. Supreme Court justice, was appointed to conduct an investigation.

Details of those allegations weren't released, but the school said Galloway did not dispute any of the critical findings when the dean of arts reviewed the report with him.

The woman said she was frustrated by the lack of information complainants were given but believes details about what happened will eventually come out.

"Honestly, I'm just relieved (UBC) took action. It would have been easier for them to not take action," she said.

> **It would have been easier for them to not take action.**
> Anonymous

Philip Steenkamp, the vice-president of external relations at UBC, wouldn't say if Galloway quit or if he was fired.

He noted that when the president recommends termination of a faculty member, it needs to be approved by the board.

That approval was given on Tuesday.

Galloway could not be reached for comment. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Blessing the bicycles

CLIMATE CHANGE

Anglican clergy are anointing environmental activism efforts

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

New Westminster diocese Anglican Bishop Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, left, powers an iPhone by bicycle. Beside her is Rev. Laurel Dykstra, with the Salal and Cedar Watershed Discipleship Community. DAVID P. BALL/METRO

Praying a blessing over a canister of bicycle chain oil may seem unorthodox, but the Anglican Bishop of New Westminster assured Metro her ritual, conducted Wednesday, was doctrinally sound.

"Yes, it's something I'm allowed to do," Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton said with a laugh, as she stood on the lawn of the Diocesan offices in Shaughnessy. "It's the every day and the useful where God shows up.

"In this case, we're blessing things … that lead to better stewardship of the environment. It starts with the small and goes bigger."

Forming the sign of the cross with her hands, the Lower Mainland region's Church of England leader officially pronounced her prayers over both bicycle chain oil and anointing oil in preparation for an annual event that's taken to the bike lanes of Toronto and now Vancouver: a "Blessing of the Bicycles."

The event, planned for 10 a.m. Thursday, is organized by an environmental and social justice project of the Anglican church — the Salal and Cedar Watershed Discipleship Community — which has engaged in prayer, education and protest for the environment and Indigenous land rights.

"It is a way of raising awareness about human-powered transport," said the community's Rev. Laurel Dykstra, standing beside Skelton as the Bishop climbed aboard a stationary bicycle being used to power Dykstra's iPhone.

> It's very much about taking on spiritual disciplines that give us the grounding and the strength to do activism, social change work ... for land justice. Rev. Laurel Dykstra

"But for us, it's much, much more than just making lifestyle changes," she added.

"It's very much about taking on spiritual disciplines that give us the grounding and the strength to do activism, social change work, and direct action … for land justice, which is what this is primarily about."

Skelton, meanwhile, said that anointing oil has an age-old history in religious tradition. In the Hebrew tradition, she explained, it was used when installing and commissioning royalty, and today is applied to the forehead during baptism to bring a new believer into a faith community.

Adapting the ritual for chain lubricant may seem unusual, but the ideas of community and being anointed for action in the world is related to environmental commitments, Skelton said.

"This is also the oil used in vehicles that would be the implements of action — protecting the climate and finding other ways to get around that don't depend so much on large amounts of fossil fuels," she explained.

Blessing of the Bicycles is open to all cyclists and will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday in Devonian Harbour Park (near Stanley Park) to apply "holy chain oil" before pedalling the Seawall to Third Beach, where ministers will lead a Eucharist service.

SCIENCE

Tween discovers superbug solution

After her mother came down with a C. difficile infection, 12-year-old Zofka Svec sprung into action to test whether hospitals were using the best disinfectant to deal with the superbug.

The science-savvy Victoria seventh grader ended up discovering a more effective solution to an infection that spreads quickly in hospital wards and seniors' homes and can be deadly for more vulnerable patients.

"I wanted to help others like my mom because I found out this was a really big problem in hospitals," the Maria Montessori Academy student said in a statement released by WorkSafeBC on Wednesday.

The tween's discovery also earned her a top award from the provincial workplace safety regulator at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair.

Currently, B.C. hospitals are using bleach to combat a superbug that has ravaged some medical facilities.

Svec tested a number of fluids on a similar bacteria — and discovered that in fact diluted hydrogen peroxide is more effective.

"(Svec's) project was the winner because she showed a level of understanding that this could have a big potential impact on health care," said WorkSafeBC occupational hygiene officer Ray Merriman, a judge for the Grade 7-12 hygiene-related award.

Though Svec has a few years left before university, she's already inspired towards studying immunology and virology.

"That's what I want to do with my life," she said, "(to) stop the spread of disease."

DAVID P. BALL/METRO

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WILDLIFE

Bear breaks into car for protein bars

The scene of the "crime." CONTRIBUTED/RCMP

What would you do for a box of protein bars?

A hungry bear broke into a North Vancouver resident's car in the early hours of Wednesday morning — all just for a snack, according to police.

"He certainly had his fill of protein that day," said Cpl. Richard De Jong, spokesperson for North Vancouver RCMP.

The owners of the vehicle, parked on Panorama Drive, woke up to find someone had smashed their car window and ripped up the interior. There was also evidence that the thief had consumed a box of protein bars left inside the car, according to a release from North Vancouver RCMP.

Paw prints, claw marks and fur at the crime scene indicated the thief was a bear.

This is the second time this week a bear has broken into a car for food on the North Shore.

"I think it's just a good reminder that bears have a really keen sense of smell," said De Jong.

"They are really strong. Nothing will get in their way of entering your vehicle."

WANYEE LI/METRO

SEE ONE?

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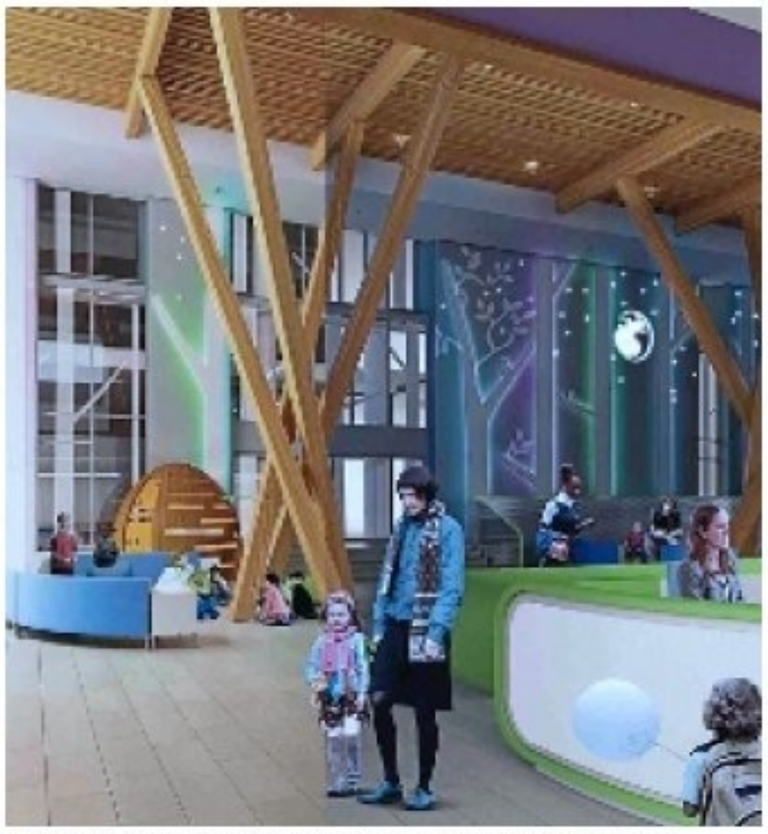

The lighting inside the new acute care centre will change throughout the day to mirror the lighting outside. PHSA/CONTRIBUTED

Healing with a focus on family

EXPANSION

Teck Acute Care Centre is slated to open November 2017

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

B.C. Children's and B.C. Women's hospital is unveiling the "whimsical and kid-friendly" interior design of its new $680-million acute care centre, a project influenced by feedback from children themselves.

The Teck Acute Care Centre (TACC) replaces three buildings that were demolished in 2014 at the centre of the B.C. Children and Women's campus on Oak Street. TACC is slated to open in November 2017.

Its project leader says the expansion is a response to a shift in how health providers deliver care.

"Our current hospital is from the 1980s.... We're moving away from the provider-centred model and more toward family-centred care," said Eleanor Lee, senior director of design and implementation for the TACC project.

Children heal best when parents or caregivers are able to stay with them as much as possible, said Lee.

"Not only does it take a village to raise a child, but it takes a whole family to heal one."

"What we have done with the design of the hospital is we have incorporated spaces that encourage the family to stay and be part of the healing journey."

All patient rooms at TACC are single-occupancy with room for loved ones to stay overnight.

The strategy has the added benefit of lowering health-care costs, Lee added.

"What studies have shown is ... allowing the family to stay with the patient actually improves recovery time. If patients are at the hospital for shorter times, then ultimately it helps lowers health-care costs."

Youth aged three to 22 years old were asked for their input on the design of the hospital, said Lee. Every area is modelled after different parts of B.C. with the hope that children from all over the province can relate to the facilities. Designers aimed to "make the building as whimsical and kid-friendly as possible," and one of the areas is beach-themed, said Lee.

"One in particular was a kid who talked about the beach and said that it reminds her of the time her dad and her would walk along the beach, Crescent Beach, and they would pick up sea shells."

Refugees still facing delays, sponsors say

SYRIAN CRISIS

500 families, 2,900 people, still wait to come to Canada

Syrian refugee children look out from their tent at a camp in Sidon, Lebanon on May 3, 2016. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In January, Canadian officials matched Sarah Crawford and her sponsorship group with a Syrian family in Turkey and told them the refugees could be here in as soon as four weeks.

The group spent thousands of dollars renting a bungalow near Victoria Park Avenue and Ellesmere Road that sat empty for four months before the family of six finally arrived on June 1 from Istanbul.

Despite the long wait and wasted rent money, Crawford's group, Rise Again, from Rosedale United Church, is actually one of the lucky ones. Hundreds of other groups are still waiting for their families to arrive.

According to Canada for Refugees, a coalition of community sponsorship groups, some 2,900 refugees, or about 500 families, who have been fully approved and are ready to travel are stuck in limbo.

"We are asking the Canadian government to arrange charter flights to get these approved families to Canada quickly," said Doug Earl, of Canada for Refugees. "The refugees are in very precarious situations in the Middle East, and there are many citizen sponsorship groups here in Canada waiting to welcome them."

On May 9, Ottawa dispatched 40 additional staff to the Middle East to process Syrian refugee sponsorship applications, in response to a public outcry over processing delays after the government met its target of resettling 25,000 Syrians refugees by the end of February.

The latest revelation of delays came just as the government wrapped up a six-week "blitz" in which officials completed 6,100 refugee interviews.

According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, these individuals and families will continue through the screening process, including full health and security checks. It will be another three to six months before they arrive.

"While it is important to prepare for the arrival of the sponsored refugees, we encourage sponsors not to obtain permanent accommodations too far in advance," the immigration department said

Earl said the number of Syrian refugees waiting for planes to Canada is increasing by 70 a week, and in one of its members' cases, the family was approved in late February and has yet to arrive.

"Many of these families have children whose best interests would be being settled in Canada before the start of the school year," said Earl. "For that to happen, they need to be moved now."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

POLITICS

Trudeau wants PM's wife's role modernized

Justin Trudeau summed up his first months in government with a self-congratulatory pat on the back for keeping key electoral promises to aid middle-class families, while also answering questions about the role of a prime minister's wife.

In a news conference eight months after taking power, Trudeau reflected on the work of wife Sophie Grégoire Trudeau when asked if it was time to modernize the role and provide resources for spouses of a prime minister, such as his own. Trudeau answered in French, "Absolutely."

Trudeau said he was "very proud" of the work Grégoire Trudeau has done for years on women's and children's issues.

Trudeau and his wife were dogged by headlines when they first hired two nannies on the public payroll to help her take care of their three children and juggle various official and unofficial tasks. In May, she said she needed more staff to "serve the people."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Justin Trudeau and Sophie Grégoire Trudeau. GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Guard unhurt after prison hostage-taking incident

Quebec provincial police say a hostage-taking at a courthouse in a remote Quebec town on Wednesday ended after a few hours.

Police say two convicts took a female correctional officer hostage in Sept-Iles before eventually surrendering.

She was not hurt, said police. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Brexit may crush your candy

UNITED KINGDOM

Vote could have impact on Canada-EU trade agreement

May Warren & Genna Buck
Metro | Toronto

Brexit may be a jolly big deal, but some Canadians are worried it will sour their chances of getting sweet and savoury treats.

Millions of Brits go to the polls Thursday to decide on staying in or leaving the European Union. There are huge issues at stake, from immigration to millions of jobs.

But there's also small stuff that could be caught in the crosshairs if the U.K votes to leave.

Andrew Cardozo, who imports British products, from mushy peas to "prawn cocktail" crisps, to his shop London Calling in Toronto, Ont., said he's following the debate closely and is concerned about what might happen if Britain bolts.

"I'll be upset if I can't get them," said Cardozo, in front of rows of imported Cadbury chocolates.

Andrew Cardozo's store, London Calling, may be caught in the middle of the Brexit debate. Cardozo is concerned about his imports if Britain leaves the European Union. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

"I think the younger people are more going to be voting yes. I have friends in Ireland and they want to move to London, so if it goes no, they're not going to be able to go to London and work," he added.

In 2013 Canada reached a free trade agreement in principle with the EU, known as CETA, but it hasn't been ratified yet.

Crina Viju, an assistant professor of European Economic Integration at Carleton University, said its future is uncertain if the U.K. pulls out.

But she doubts Britain will put up any barriers to trade with Canada even if it decides to fly solo.

"It's up in the air," she said. "Everything has to be renegotiated of course.

"If the U.K. will be out of the EU before the ratification happens, what kind of deal will they sign with Canada? The same? Or a better one, or a worse one? Again it's a question," she said.

Paul Million, owner of Mississauga's Simply British foods, is also watching the referendum closely, and has been waiting for the free trade agreement to be ratified because it will allow him to import British meat products he hasn't been able to sell since Mad Cow disease.

"If the U.K. decides that they want to pull out than that whole thing will probably unravel," he said.

"I think it's going to be a close call."

MUNCHIES

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Referendum explained

On Thursday, citizens of the United Kingdom will vote in a referendum on whether their country should remain in or withdraw from the European Union. Here's what you need to know.

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

The referendum question will read, "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"

CANADIANS CAN VOTE?

Yes, if you are a Canadian citizen who currently lives in the U.K.

WHAT DO POLLS SAY?

According to the Financial Times's Brexit poll tracker, it's a neck-and-neck race, with 44 per cent in favour of remaining with the EU, 45 per cent in favour of leaving and 11 per cent undecided.

WILL LEAVING IMPACT THE ECONOMY?

In the short term, a vote to leave will likely weaken the pound, and could boost the U.S. dollar as investors look for more stable currencies.

There is largely consensus amongst economists that leaving the EU would have long-term negative consequences for the U.K. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada Post explores the sky

MAIL

No plans for deliveries with drones ... yet

It's a little early to tell if the idea will fly, but Canada Post is starting to look at the role of drones in making deliveries.

The post office is quietly exploring the possibility of small, unmanned aerial vehicles one day helping get the mail to where it needs to go, said Jon Hamilton, a Canada Post spokesman.

"We are in a competitive space, especially when it comes to parcel delivery and things like that," Hamilton said in an interview.

In the post office's 250-year history, the manner of getting letters and parcels to Canadians has evolved from a couple of horses to trains, trucks and planes — so it makes sense to eye lightweight, remote-controlled aircraft, he said.

"We do look into these things."

The tiny flying machines have become immensely popular with hobbyists. But they're also used for a variety of government-related and commercial applications, including agricultural surveys, movie shoots, police investigations, meteorology, and search and rescue.

The DJI Inspire Raw drone helicopter on display at CES International on Jan. 4 in Las Vegas. It's a little early to tell if the idea will fly, but Canada Post is starting to look at the role of drones in making deliveries. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada Post declined to release documents through the Access to Information Act about its interest in drones, citing sensitivities such as trade secrets and financial, commercial, scientific or technical data.

But Hamilton insists there are no drone prototypes in the post office laboratory — at least not yet.

He characterized the effort as a "paper exercise" at the very early exploratory stages, aimed at "examining what's out there today."

"It's not something that Canadians are going to see any time soon, if at all."

Still, Canada Post is conscious that companies such as online retailer Amazon are actively investigating delivery drones.

> **"There was a lot of time between moving from horses to trains. Things don't move that slowly anymore.**
> Jon Hamilton

"It may be something that has applications for the postal service," Hamilton said. "But it may be something that is just more of an emerging threat to the existing postal business, and how do we respond to that?"

Amazon bills Prime Air as a future service that will deliver packages weighing up to five pounds in 30 minutes or less using small drones. The company says it has developed more than a dozen vehicle designs, with testing under way in multiple international locales, including British Columbia.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BlackBerry focused on its phones

BlackBerry Ltd. has targeted this fiscal year to make money from its smartphone business, chief executive John Chen told shareholders at the company's annual general meeting in Waterloo Wednesday.

"We need to make that profitable . . . we have a plan for it," Chen said during a sometimes unruly meeting that saw one investor challenge executive compensation at BlackBerry and accuse management of "bleeding the company dry."

Chen was awarded $85.7 million US in 2014, his first year as CEO, with most of the compensation in the form of restricted shares that vest over five years. His pay fell 96 per cent to $3.4 million in fiscal 2015.

"The device business must be profitable, because we don't want to run a business that drags onto the bottom line," Chen told the meeting. "We've got to get there this year," referring to BlackBerry fiscal 2017 that started in March.

Chen in April said the company would consider ditching the hardware business by September if it cannot be made profitable. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, June 23, 2016

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON TORY LEADERSHIP MANOEUVRING

Winning Quebec will not alone win anyone the Conservative leadership next spring, but being shut out of the province could be fatal — especially if Ontario splits three or four ways.

On a day-to-day basis, few Parliament watchers pay attention to Lévis-Lobtinière MP Jacques Gourde. On the Hill, his main claim to fame is to have been the only Conservative from Quebec to not make the cut of Stephen Harper's last cabinet. He spent his party's decade in power on the backbench of the government. In the new Parliament, the scenery is different but Gourde's role is as low-key as in the previous ones.

But outside the bubble, the fourth-term MP is distinguished by his electoral resilience. In contrast with colleagues invested with more gravitas such as Michael Fortier — Harper's handpicked senatorial minister for Montreal — or Lawrence Cannon, Josée Verner and Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Gourde kept his rural Quebec seat through challenging Conservative times. He even survived the 2011 orange wave.

Gourde's forte is organization. He cut his teeth as a volunteer for the provincial Action Démocratique du Québec party and the federal Conservatives at a time when both were facing uphill battles just to be taken seriously. In 2006 he decided to run.

In that federal campaign, Gourde's riding was one of the few places where Harper could hope to draw a decent crowd. On one visit to the rural riding, a cortege of 50 pickup trucks was reportedly on hand to provide a motorcade for the Conservative leader. It probably helped that it was the dead of winter and that Gourde's fellow farmers had a bit of time on their hands.

As the long campaign to select a successor to Harper slowly gets underway, most Conservative MPs are keeping their cards close to their chests. They want to see the full lineup before they commit to a camp.

But Gourde has already made his choice. He is the co-chair of Maxime Bernier's leadership campaign and more of a catch than appearances or titles would suggest.

For, notwithstanding his native son status, it is hardly a given that Bernier will earn the backing of many more Quebec MPs.

His penchant for taking a knife to sacred cows has not necessarily endeared him to his colleagues

He once mused about doing away with the language law — a notion that has only negative traction within Quebec's political class.

He believes Canada's corporations, including Bombardier, should be weaned from federal subsidies.

More recently, Bernier came out against supply management, a program of iconic status in rural Quebec. Gourde had to scramble to explain that stance to his own constituents. He ended up soft-pedalling it.

All of which is to say that when the time comes to collect endorsements, the Beauce MP might not be overwhelmed with Quebec caucus support. But by then, it may not matter all that much.

In a one-member, one-vote leadership contest, the weight of the party establishment is infinitely less significant than in the days when so-called ex-officio delegates made up as much as a third of those who voted at delegated conventions.

A solid organization can trump myriad high-profile endorsements.

Just ask former Ontario Tory minister Christine Elliott. She had impeccable connections to the party establishment and a proven track record ... and she was trounced by federal backbencher Patrick Brown in last year's Ontario Tory leadership vote.

Could Bernier pull the same trick at the federal level? That would depend on whether his campaign has boots on the ground in the other regions. This is one operation where having support a mile wide, even if only an inch deep, is actually better than the alternative.

In the Conservative leadership arithmetic, every riding is worth an equal number of points regardless of the size of its membership. Securing a solid footing in Quebec — the province with the second-highest number of seats — early on could turn Bernier into more of a force to contend with than his opponents expect or the polls suggest.

Winning Quebec will not alone win anyone the Conservative leadership next spring, but being shut out of the province could be fatal — especially if Ontario splits three or four ways.

While so-called big name candidates such as Jason Kenney and Peter MacKay fiddle with possible leadership bids, Bernier is preemptively locking Quebec votes. Sometimes the early bird does catch the worm!

FACE OF A KINGMAKER? Low-profile Conservative MP Jacques Gourde is known as a master campaign organizer. Having hitched his wagon to Maxime Bernier, Gourde could play the key role in the party's leadership contest. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

Campus-sex-assault fight requires paradigm shift on privacy issues

When universities play the privacy card in sexual assault allegations, it's a supremely terrible look.

Last week, it was Simon Fraser University's turn to seem both heartless and spineless, the one-two punch of bad PR.

To all questions asked about any details of the case of a male student accused by three female students of sexual assault — complaints more fulsomely catalogued in a series of pieces by the Vancouver Sun's Daphne Bramham — officials responded with the mantra: "I cannot comment due to privacy concerns."

It's a line that sounds suspiciously like obfuscation and brand management. But to be fair, universities are in a legal bind. All public institutions are governed by provincial access to information and protection of privacy laws that include broad restrictions not just for privacy, but the dissemination of any personal information.

Essentially, as privacy expert and lawyer Michael Power told me, schools are prohibited from publishing details that may lead to a person being identified. Power himself would counsel this exact tight-lipped approach.

But this abundance of caution is far from just. It is purely and only legally expedient, and it must change.

Not only does the status quo threaten the safety of women by obscuring important information about alleged criminals, but it de facto privileges the privacy rights of said alleged criminals over justice for victims, nevermind the school's interest in avoiding bad press. This has been the case at schools for decades. No surprise then, evidenced by abysmal reporting rates (about one in 10 assaults), that women have noticed.

We are at a turning point, where provinces are beginning to force universities to institute clear and discrete sexual assault policies. But the laws, while more thorough in Ontario than B.C., remain too weak. They require policies in only the broadest of terms, and rely on schools, historically feeble protectors of women's safety, to magically transform into robust ones. There's no demand to routinely collect and publish crucial data that could finally offer a truer window into the problem. And there are no requirements for universities to report sexual assault complaints to police.

Nor do these bills change the balance of power on campus, which favours the privacy of alleged rapists. Sure, that's how privacy laws have been written. But since they lead to negligent behaviour on the part of colleges, it seems high time we amend those laws to allow more transparency.

If we don't, even schools that want to be more transparent will be prevented from doing so. And the public, and most importantly survivors, will believe that, on sexual violence, schools are all lip service and no action.

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metro LIFE

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Bryan Cranston signs on for Power Rangers movie reboot

The CFL's hail Mary moment

While our U.S. neighbours have turned football into a religion — from the Friday night lights of high school fields to the ad-strewn Super Bowl — Canadians haven't embraced the game as much. The Canadian Football League has kicked off a new plan to create a deeper bond with younger fans to keep the game alive. Here is how they are doing it.

KATE PETTERSEN FOR METRO CANADA

CFL HANDOUTS

The Canadian Football League is rich in talent and culture, but for the most part fans are born into it. Maybe your grandfather was a fan, your parents follow the league or your uncle used to play.

In a country where the sports landscape is growing at a rapid pace, arts and culture are thriving in major cities and the competition for peoples' interest continues to increase, the CFL recognized the need for a change.

"We want to keep the brand fresh, new and invigorated for our existing fan base," said Commissioner Jeffery Orridge. "At the same time we need to attract the attention of the next generation of fans."

Their league-wide rebrand is a push to attract millennials with a reenergized presence both on and off the field — one that showcases the skill and athleticism of its players and features a handful of new stadiums across the country.

A party in Montreal last month, featuring a late night performance by Taboo of the Black Eyed Peas, marked the launch of a new clothing deal with Adidas.

More than 300 attendees packed the dance floor of Time Supper Club, staying until close, to mingle with players and snap photos with the Grey Cup.

And, fitting perfectly with the league's fresh mandate, the partnership includes new uniforms, sideline apparel and an Originals lifestyle collection for fans.

Teams have also stepped up their social media presence in effort to create culture and recognition around Thursday Night Football, complete with in-game DJs, pre-game shows, and tailgating. Players are jumping on board to help spread the word: Whether it's Snapchat takeovers during practice, contests for fans on Instagram or behind the scenes video footage on road trips, access to social media is creating a deeper connection between fans and some of the league's brightest stars.

Feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive, said Orridge.

"The players love the idea of this new style CFL. They realize they are the most valuable assets of the league and it's a real focus that we're showcasing them not only on the field but also telling their stories off the field."

Revamping the Lions

A familiar face will be back on the sidelines as head coach of the BC Lions. When Wally Buono, one of the most successful coaches in CFL history, took over the role of General Manager, he promised his team he would return to the sidelines if that's where they needed him. Since then, despite making the playoffs each year, the Lions have not been able to win a playoff game. For Buono, it's apparent his team could use some rejuvenation.

"We have to be better as an organization and we have to be better as a football club," said Buono. "It starts with the coaches and the players. Exciting football sells and that's something that we want to do more this year."

He'll have to shake the rust off but the role is nothing new for him. Buono spent nine seasons at the helm, his last in 2011, when he coached the Lions to a Grey Cup championship win.

POLITICS AND POETRY COLLIDE

For months, the baffling, repetitious ravings of Donald Trump niggled at the back of the mind of University of Pennsylvania linguistics professor Mark Liberman: Something was familiar.

"Where else have I seen or heard this pointillistic, repetitive style?" Liberman mused this week on his blog, Language log.

He took out the punctuation, and "suddenly the stylistic model leaps off the page."

Trump's speeches are uncannily similar to 20th century poet Gertrude Stein — known for her skilful use of nonsense and repetition.

GENNA BUCK/METRO

> You know the Republicans honestly folks our leaders our leaders have to get tougher. This is too tough to do it alone but you know what I think I'm gonna be forced to. I think I'm going to be forced to. Our leaders have to get a lot tougher. And be quiet, just please be quiet don't talk please be quiet. Just be quiet to the leaders. — Donald Trump

> There is singularly nothing that makes a difference a difference in beginning and in the middle and in ending except that each generation has something different at which they are all looking. By this I mean so simply that anybody knows it that composition is the difference which makes each and all of them then different from other generations and this is what makes everything different otherwise they are all alike and everybody knows it because everybody says it. — Gertrude Stein

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Lawren Harris doc relishes in his prose

Ben Low as Lawren Harris at Quidi Vidi, Newfoundland, from the documentary Where the Universe Sings: The Spiritual Journey of Lawren Harris. CONTRIBUTED

THE SHOW: Where the Universe Sings: The Spiritual Journey of Lawren Harris
THE MOMENT: The letter to Emily

As we see in this documentary by Nancy Lang and Peter Raymont, the Canadian painters Lawren Harris and Emily Carr met in 1927 and began exchanging letters. She praised his "world shorn of fretting details, purged and purified."

He encouraged her, "Stay with your own way. Use the feeling that the stuff is awful to make the next thing less awful. I've learned to keep right on, despite the recurring sureness that my stuff is pretty damn sad."

A more succinct summary of the artistic mindset you cannot find.

Harris didn't leave us only paintings. He also gave us reams about why he painted; why he needed to.

"I'm in great need of losing my littleness," he wrote in 1930, on his first trip to the Arctic, where he'd make some of his most definitive work. "I'm hoping to get freed from my inhibitions and move into exaltation."

This doc makes liberal use of Harris's prose. Sometimes we hear it in voice-over (from Colm Feore) while an actor pretends to paint. This is hokey but forgivable. Much better are the times when his words wash over us while the camera lingers on his art. In these moments, the spiritual journey promised by the title comes most alive.

I'm truly worried for future biographers and filmmakers, who will have to explain their subjects without the gift of correspondence.

You don't find a phrase like, "Art is a bridge between the great moral harmony of the universe and our own souls" in an email.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

When superheroes don't save you

Dark Night: A True Batman Story
BY: Paul Dini and Eduardo Russo
PUBLISHER: DC Comics/Vertigo

One night, Batman writer Paul Dini was walking alone when two men approached, yelling insults.

They beat him, badly, sending him to the hospital. But although the physical damage was severe, the worst damage was psychological. How can you write Batman: The Animated Series when you know there's no hero coming to save you?

This unusual graphic novel is something special. Although it features comic book characters like Harley Quinn, who Dini co-created, it's autobiographical.

The costumed heroes and villains are in Dini's imagination, manifesting as he tries to recover from his injuries, seen and unseen, and regain his voice as a writer. The story is harrowing in places, especially a scene where Dini self-harms using an Emmy Award he's just won. There's also a brutality in the writing, as if he's beating himself up with criticism and too much honesty.

But there's charm, too.

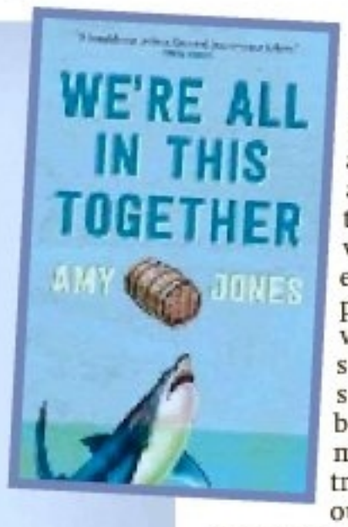
MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Tumbling over the edge — in a barrel

DEBUT NOVEL

Story of quirky family pegged on daredevil waterfall stunt

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada



Amy Jones says "I really like writing about places" and tried hard to get the emotional feel of Thunder Bay right in her debut novel. CONTRIBUTED

Whenever Amy Jones visits Kakabeka Falls, which isn't far from her home in Thunder Bay, she often has a morbid thought: "What would happen if I fell in?"

And that's what happens to her character, Kate Parker, the matriarch of a dysfunctional family, in Jones' funny but heartfelt debut novel, We're All in This Together.

Except that Kate intentionally chooses to go over the 40-metre-high falls, daredevil-style, in a barrel. (In reality, Jones is fairly certain that no one could survive the ride.) Kate's kamikaze-grandma stunt is captured on a video that goes viral and makes international tabloid news, pulling together three generations of the Parkers in what is only the beginning of the family's adventure.

Kate's near death brings back to town her daughter Finn, the only member to have left Thunder Bay and whose lonely life in Toronto has fallen apart.

Kate's husband, Walter, seems in turn bewildered and accepting of his wife's erratic behaviour. There's Shawn, a former street kid who has lived with the Parkers for years but still feels emotionally insecure in his position within the family, and his wife Katriina, a seemingly all-together real estate agent with dark secrets of her own.

And then there's Nikki — Finn's identical twin sister and opposite in all ways — a fiery single mom with several kids, including a son conceived with Finn's then-boyfriend, and London, a precocious animal lover who falls in love online with a Shark Week host.

We're All in This Together is a complicated layering of time shifts and perspectives, as each character takes their turn revealing their inner emotional lives and personal history. In writing the manuscript, Jones used sheets of Bristol board and coloured markers to keep track of all the various timelines and backstories.

"It was a big knot that I was trying to untangle, pulling out threads," she says.

Jones always knew that she wanted her book to be set in Thunder Bay, her adopted home of six years. Many of the short stories in her first book, What Boys Like, were set in Halifax, where she grew up.

"It's become part of my trademark," she says.

"I really like writing about places."

She had observed that outside of a few exceptions, such as Michael Christie's If I Fall, If I Die, there has been very little northwestern Ontario literature set in an urban environment.

"I feel really inspired by the city. Not in the way that people would assume — the natural landscape and the forest and the lake," says Jones.

"Really what I find fascinating about living here are the people and their tenacity. The real family connections that people have. The constant pull of needing to go or wanting to stay, and vice versa. It's a very complex relationship with the city."

Although Jones did plenty of research about the region, even digging deep into topics such as ground erosion, she was more concerned about getting the emotional feel of Thunder Bay right.

"I really did want it to reflect back what I saw and what I experienced. I tried to be as honest as I could be," says Jones.

"I didn't think about it when I was writing, but since people have been reading the book, I feel like an ambassador."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

metro HOME
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Design company Dos de Tres turns vintage telephones into lamps

MEET THE CONDO

Master-planned playground

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

Evelyn is an established master-planned community located on West Vancouver's Sentinel Hill. Residents enjoy lush surroundings, West Coast modern architecture and the convenience of two direct connections to Park Royal Mall. The next phase will provide 67 opportunities to purchase.

Housing amenities

Evelyn carries beautiful interiors with integrated Sub-Zero and Miele appliances, granite countertops, in-home automation and forced air heating and cooling. Bathrooms are equipped with a heated natural stone floor. The oversized terraces, offer privacy and exceptional views.

Location and transit

The Park Royal bus stop is only a two-minute walk from Evelyn. For downtown Vancouver, they are in close proximity to the Lions Gate Bridge. With a direct connection to Highway 1, Highway 99 and the ferries nearby in Horseshoe Bay, escapes to the Sunshine Coast and Whistler are easy.

In the neighbourhood

From the beaches of Ambleside along to Dundarave, to the rocky shoreline of Lighthouse Park through to Howe Sound, West Vancouver is an unparalleled playground. With 138 parks, Evelyn is perfect for those with active lifestyles. There's no shortage, with year-round options from sailing to skiing.

NEED TO KNOW

What: Evelyn
Builder: ONNI
Designer: In-house
Location: Sentinel Hill, West Vancouver
Building: Master-planned community
Sizes: From 850 sq. ft. to 2,065 sq. ft.
Model: One bedroom and den; two bedrooms; two bedrooms and den; three bedrooms with family room
Pricing: From $1,199,900
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Occupancy: End of 2019
Sales centre: 710 Keith Rd., West Vancouver
Phone: 604-922-0330
Website: Onni.com

HOME PROJECT

Add some buzz to your backyard with DIY tile project

Transform an unfinished wood table with colourful tile and paint.

Step 1: Gather supplies:
- Coffee table
- Tile
- Paint
- Wood trim
- Sandpaper
- Pre-mixed tile adhesive & grout
- Notched trowel
- Rubber grout float
- Saw
- Painter's tape
- Tape measure
- Paintbrush
- Sponge and bowl

Step 2: Prep your surface.
Lightly sand the wood.

Step 3: Lay out the tile
Place your tile on the table surface. Allow space for grout lines (1/8" — 1/4"). Use painter's tape to mark an outside border. Adhesive will be applied within this border.

Step 4: Apply tile adhesive.
Use the flat edge of the trowel to apply a thin layer of adhesive. Immediately add more and use the square comb edge to distribute it, moving in one direction.

Step 5: Press tiles into place.
Starting in one corner, press the first tile in place ensuring it is straight and level. Repeat with all of the tiles, pressing into place and ensuring each and every one is straight and level. Make sure to leave space between tiles for grout lines. When you're done, remove the painter's tape. Clean any excess adhesive from edges with a damp rag. Let the tiles set for 24 hours.

Step 6: Apply grout.
Using a rubber grout float tool, apply grout to the tiles, pushing it gently into the grout lines. Ensure that the grout fills the lines and is relatively smooth.

Step 7: Clean off excess.
Fill a bowl or pail with water and use a damp sponge to remove excess grout from tiles. Let the grout set before removing the cloudy looking grout haze from the tiles. Let grout dry for 24 hours before handling.

Step 8: Trim.
Measure and cut wood trim to finish off the edging around tile. Paint the trim with two coats.

Step 9: Paint the table
Apply two coats of paint to all exposed wood on the table. Let dry according to product directions.

Step 10: Finish off with trim.
Fasten the trim onto the table with small finishing nails or use a strong glue like Gorilla Glue.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It's the perfect weekend project to transform a wood coffee table into a colourful tiled table. PHOTOS DEBRA NORTON/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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No purchase necessary. One entry per person, per day. Contest open to residents Toronto, ON and Vancouver, BC who have attained the provincial age of majority at the start of the Contest Period. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. One (1) Grand Prize is available to be won per market with an ARV of $250 CDN. Five (5) secondary prizes are available to be won per market each with an ARV of $50 CDN. Each selected entrant must correctly answer, unaided, a mathematical skill-testing question to be declared a winner. Contest Period opens at 12:01 am ET on June 22, 2016 and closes at 11:59 pm ET on June 26, 2016. To enter and for complete contest rules visit www.wonderlist.ca

LANDSCAPING

Great gardens start with a plan

Mark Cullen
For Torstar News Service

Just as your home needs a great foundation, so too does your garden. Don't cheap out on soil. DREAMSTIME

You see them early in the morning, travelling in herds — spectres in the mist. The first sighting usually involves a club cab pickup truck full of brightly vested, coffee-toting professionals, often with a trailer in tow, loaded with plants, equipment and dirt. Inside the cab are the implementers of the plan: The landscape plan. What are their secrets to doing great work? Here are my tips for a great garden installation:

Secure a plan

When you consult with a garden designer whose full-time job is landscape/garden planning, you will learn short cuts to a great-looking garden. To find a good designer, go to a reliable garden retailer for a reference or an industry association. Note that they are in their high season right now, so there will likely be a wait.

Great dirt

Would you build a house without a foundation? Of course not. Buy the very best soil you can to create a home for the roots of your new plants. What soil? "Triple mix." It is 30 per cent top soil, 30 per cent peat moss, 30 per cent finished compost and 10 per cent earth worm castings.

Dig down

The area where you wish to create new planting beds needs proper preparation. This is grunt work, no kidding. If you have clay-based soil, dig down 30 to 40 centimetres. In extreme cases, you will have to use a pick axe to do the job. Be sure your digging tools are sharp. Replace the old soil with the new triple mix and add 20 centimetres. Mound it high as it will settle over time to grade.

Buy quality plants

I've seen a lot of effort go into soil prep only to feature second-rate plants.

Dig wide, plant high

Plant trees more wide than deep. Most trees spread their roots horizontally rather than straight down. If the root mass of the plant is 50 centimetres deep, dig the hole about 60 centimetres deep and line the hole with enough new soil that the plant stands several centimetres above grade once planted.

Mark Cullen is an expert gardener, author and broadcaster. Follow him on Twitter @MarkCullen4.

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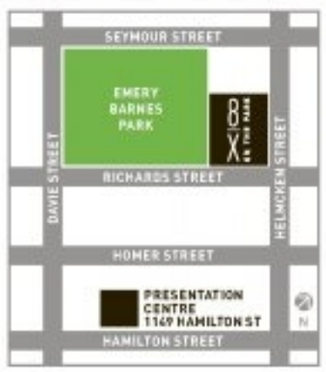

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metro SPORTS

Golfer Rory McIlroy opted out of the Rio Olympics because of concerns about the Zika virus, saying it is "a risk I am unwilling to take"

Las Vegas hits jackpot, scores expansion team

NHL

Sin City granted 31st team while Quebec City's bid deferred

With searing temperatures closing in on a brow-soaking 45 C outside, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman strode to the podium in the ballroom of a swanky, climate-controlled hotel and casino to deliver the news everyone was expecting.

The league is going all in on Las Vegas.

Gary Bettman GETTY IMAGES

Bettman said the NHL board of governors unanimously accepted an expansion bid from Sin City on Wednesday, with the new team set to begin play in the 2017-18 season.

"We think this is a tremendously exciting opportunity, not just for Las Vegas, but for the league," Bettman told a packed news conference. "This expansion comes at a time when our game is more competitive than ever, ownership is stronger than ever, the player base is more talented than ever and the business, and the future opportunities for the business, are greater than ever."

Joining the word's top hockey league doesn't come cheap — prospective Las Vegas owner Bill Foley owes a $500-million US expansion fee to the NHL, which hasn't added a team since 2000.

Back then, Minnesota and Columbus paid $80 million each to join the league.

"Well Las Vegas, we did it. It wasn't easy, was it?" Foley said. "Our great sports town now has a major-league franchise — the NHL. It's the best of the leagues, it's a legendary league.

"My obligation is to hold this team in trust for the community. I'm the owner, but I do it on behalf of the community."

The board of governors also decided to defer Quebec City's bid, despite the city having a brand new arena as part of its application to become the NHL's 31st franchise. Bettman said the fluctuation of the Canadian dollar and the league's geographical imbalance — there are currently 16 teams in the Eastern Conference compared to 14 in the West — worked against Quebec City.

"There is no doubt as to the passion for NHL hockey in Quebec City, there is no doubt as to the suitability of the Videotron Centre as a home arena for a team, and there is no doubt to the ownership credentials ... of Quebecor, which has been an outstanding partner," said Bettman.

Quebecor CEO Pierre Dion said he was disappointed with the decision, but made it clear the media company will continue working to bring back NHL hockey. "The expansion process conducted over the last year gave us an excellent opportunity to present our business plan and promote Quebec City as a city that can support an NHL franchise," said Dion. "Bringing the Nordiques back to Quebec City remains a priority for Quebecor."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

NHL AWARDS

Hart Memorial Trophy (most valuable to his team)
Patrick Kane, Chicago
Ted Lindsay Award (MVP as voted by NHLPA)
Patrick Kane, Chicago
James Norris Memorial Trophy (top defenceman)
Drew Doughty, L.A.
Vezina Trophy (top goaltender)
Braden Holtby, Washington
King Clancy Memorial Trophy (exemplifies leadership qualities on and off the ice, humanitarian contribution in his community)
Henrik Sedin, Vancouver

Go to metronews.ca for more from Wednesday's NHL Awards.

Ireland's players celebrate scoring against Italy on Wednesday in Lille, France. FRANCOIS LO PRESTI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

SOCCER

France's song of Ice and Ire

Ireland advanced to the knockout stages of the European Championship for the first time after it beat a reshuffled Italian side 1-0 on Wednesday.

An 85th-minute late goal from Robbie Brady was enough for the spirited Ireland side to secure a place in the round of 16 as one of the best third-place teams. Its reward — a match against France in Lyon on Sunday.

"It was very special. I am thrilled, it was a great win," Ireland coach Martin O'Neill said. "We deserved to win. We played some phenomenal stuff. There wasn't a player in the Irish shirt that didn't play heroically."

EURO 2016 GROUP STAGE ENDS

Italy was already assured of top spot in Group E after two straight group wins.

Brady's goal was just reward for an inspired performance by the Ireland team, which needed to win to get through.

His goal, which stemmed from a cross by second-half substitute Wes Hoolahan, came just moments after Hoolahan himself had missed a golden chance to put Ireland ahead.

Iceland, the smallest nation at the Euros, delivered the feel-good story of the tournament by beating Austria 2-1 to qualify for the round of 16.

The victory, secured by a goal deep into stoppage time by Arnor Ingvi Traustason, earned Iceland's players the game they'd dreamed of: a last-16 match against England.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Chile earns return trip to Copa America final
Charles Aranguiz and Jose Pedro Feunzalida scored in the first half and defending champion Chile returned to the Copa America championship with a soggy 2-0 victory over Colombia on Wednesday night in Chicago.

Led by Claudio Bravo's stellar effort in goal, Chile earned its fourth straight win since a 2-1 loss to top-ranked Argentina in their Group D opener. Next up is a rematch with La Albiceleste in the final Sunday night in New Jersey. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mariners sink to .500
The Seattle Mariners have fallen all the way back to .500.

Hisashi Iwakuma allowed three home runs — two to Steven Moya — and the Mariners lost 5-1 to the Tigers on Wednesday night in Detroit. It was Seattle's fifth straight loss and its 18th in the last 26 games. The Mariners (36-36) are now 10-1/2 games behind first-place Texas in the AL West. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Knicks land former MVP Rose in trade with Bulls
The New York Knicks acquired Derrick Rose from the Chicago Bulls on Wednesday, hoping the former NBA MVP can be their answer at point guard.

The Knicks sent centre Robin Lopez and guards Jose Calderon and Jerian Grant to the Bulls in the deal. New York also received guard Justin Holiday and a 2017 second-round pick, and waived point guard Tony Wroten.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cleveland celebrates Cavs
Hundreds of thousands of fans overwhelmed downtown Cleveland to celebrate the Cavaliers' NBA championship.

Fans, celebrating the end of the city's 52-year championship drought, also stood on rooftops, portable toilets and hung out of office building windows hoping to get a glimpse of LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and their teammates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RECIPE Grilled Shrimp Salad

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

The black beans and corn make this a hearty and satisfying meal.

Ready in
Prep time: 1 hour
Cook time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 cloves of garlic minced
- couple of grinds of black pepper
- 1 pound large shrimp,
- 4 or 5 wooden skewers
- 2 or 3 cobs of corn
- 1 x 19 ounce can black beans
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 avocado, diced
- 4 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 Tbsp lime juice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 head Boston lettuce, washed, spun and chopped

Directions

1. Mix together vegetable oil, lime juice, soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic and pepper in a bowl. Add shrimp, cover, and place in the fridge for about an hour. Soak your wooden skewers.

2. Oil your grill and turn on high. Place corn on top and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, turning every 5 minutes. Remove and allow to cool before slicing off the kernels. Mix corn, beans, chopped peppers and coriander in a bowl. Fold in avocado. Whisk together oil, lime juice, salt, cumin and pepper. Dress the bean mixture.

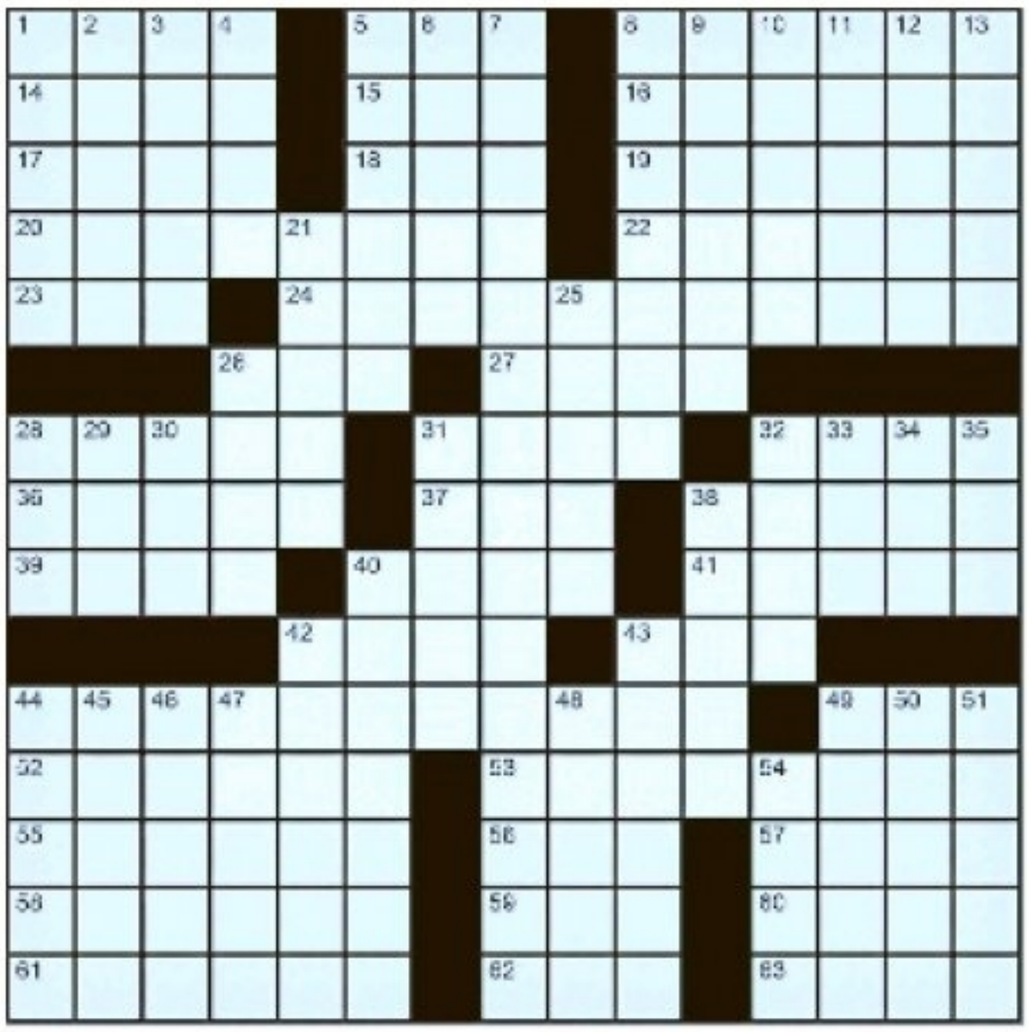
4. Take shrimp out of fridge and put about three on each skewer. Barbecue for about six minutes. Allow them to cool slightly before sliding them off the skewers.

4. On a serving plate, arrange the chopped lettuce and pile the beans and grilled shrimp on top.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" character
5. "Sunglasses at Night" singer ...his initials-sharers
8. Lassos
14. Fort __, Ontario
15. Derisive shout!
16. Make certain
17. Ms. Olin
18. Sweat spot
19. "Bird Song" by Canadian band The _' Jennys
20. 'The Great' river in Quebec: 2 mots
22. Bands like Arcade Fire
23. Diane's portrayer on "Cheers" ...her initials-sharers
24. 2009 Adam Sandler movie about an unwell comedian, co-starring Vancouver-born actor Seth Rogen: 2 wds.
26. __ Angeles
27. Leaver
28. Google alternative
31. Gov. agents
32. Hat-tipper's polite address
36. Politically pick
37. White House nickname
38. Vocalize
39. Fish __
40. Folk singer/actor Mr. Ives
41. Rankin __, Nunavut
42. Pre-midnight time, __ 'clock
43. Genetic info carrier
44. 'Jewel of the Eastern Townships' village in Quebec: 2 wds.
49. Nature's swimming pool, in French
52. Off the boat/On the beach
53. Catholic prayer: 2 wds.
55. Comic actress Ms. Leachman
56. Manchester's li'l country
57. Guitarist Mr. Clapton
58. Delete private information
59. Operated
60. President's desk locale, __ Office
61. Obliterates
62. Charlotte, to Emily or Anne, for short
63. Lessen

DOWN
1. Where wishes are made
2. Cosmetics company, L'__
3. Tree growth indicators
4. Foreboding
5. The Swan constellation
6. Austrian composer, Joseph __ (b.1732 - d.1809)
7. Yosh and Stan on "SCTV": 2 wds.
8. Towel dries the still-wet dish
9. More asinine
10. Rita Coolidge/Kris Kristofferson duet: "Blue ___"
11. Dutch flower
12. The Tempest spirit
13. Perception
21. In progress
25. Sing in The Alps
26. Key's pal
28. Hitherto
29. Neighbour of Tenn.
30. Egg-warming bird
31. Region's animal life
32. Homer Simpson's mother
33. Garlic: French
34. Whiz
35. NYC opera house
38. Retro record
40. Commands
42. Three*times
43. Condescends
44. Mother-of-pearl
45. Saskatchewan town near Saskatoon
46. Valerie Harper title sitcom role
47. Words in a 1970 war picture's title!
48. Hawaiian island
49. Caterpillar, for example
50. 'Parliament' suffix
51. Pedal
54. __ Mix (Cat food brand)

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Someone older might have excellent advice for you today. Probably, this person is a female. At the very least, listen to what she has to say.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will impress people in authority (bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs) with your serious, conscientious, responsible attitude today. They know they can depend on you.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is an excellent day to make long-range travel plans. It's also a good day to discuss opportunities in publishing, the media, medicine, the law and higher education.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Roll up your sleeves and clean away loose details about inheritances, shared property, taxes and debt. This is also a good day to do banking details and pay bills.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You have to compromise with others today, because the Moon is in a sign that is opposite your sign. It works that way. This simply requires a little patience. No biggie.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You will be productive at work today because you have the attitude and energy necessary to do routine stuff. Get as much done as possible while you are in this mood.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You might develop a crush on someone older today, or vice versa. In addition, you will take your responsibilities regarding children very seriously.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Family discussions will be practical and serious today. In fact, an older family member might have important input. This is a good day to plan how to better secure your home.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
It pleases you today to do things that help your life to be more orderly. You are in a practical frame of mind, and you want to see things around you work smoothly.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If shopping today, you will buy only items that are practical and long-lasting. No feather boas for you! You want to save money.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Because the Moon is in your sign today, you might feel more emotional than usual. However, you also might be luckier than usual! Ask the universe for a favor to see what happens.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Working alone or doing behind-the-scenes research appeals to you today. You won't overlook details because you have the right frame of mind to do this.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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	1				3	8		
9					5		6	
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	2	5		9				
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		3	6				8	
				4		5		

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Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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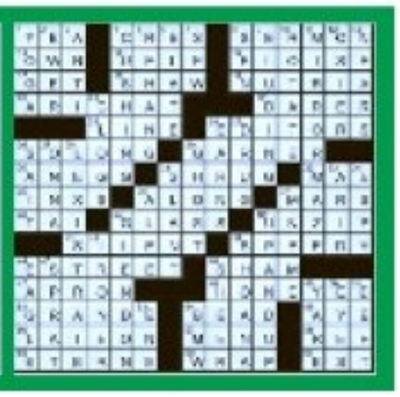
8	9	5	6	3	4	2	1	7
7	4	3	9	2	1	8	5	6
1	2	6	7	8	3	4	9	5
5	3	7	1	4	9	6	2	8
4	8	9	5	6	2	3	7	1
3	6	1	4	9	7	5	8	2
2	5	8	3	1	6	7	4	9
9	7	4	2	5	8	1	6	3



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Public consultation is a big part of the project. The gallery has engaged with the public through surveys, focus groups and public engagements. JENNIFER GAUTHIER

Art gallery project moving forward

CULTURAL INITIATIVE

The hope is to open the new gallery in 2021

Stephanie Orford

The new Vancouver Art Gallery building, which has been in the works since 2004, is "the most important cultural initiative in B.C. of our generation," according to Kathleen Bartels, director of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The project is currently on schedule, she says. The gallery is now refining details of the schematic design, which will be shared with the public this fall.

"We anticipate breaking ground in late 2017, and we hope to open the new gallery in 2021," says Bartels.

The project is moving forward despite some challenges. When the gallery unveiled its new design last September, initial public sentiment was mixed. Art philanthropist Michael Audain, a prominent potential donor, also voiced hesitation about the project.

But the plans have received strong support overall, says Bartels.

"Any project of this scale and impact has its share of challenges, but we couldn't move forward without the overwhelming support we have received from artists and cultural colleagues in Vancouver and across the country, our members, donors and government partners," says Bartels.

The provincial government donated an initial $50 million, and the City of Vancouver donated land designated for the project — the Larwill Park site located at West Georgia and Cambie Streets, which is currently a parking lot.

Thus far, the gallery's board of trustees and several supporters have committed $28 million to the project. It's the most private money raised for a cultural project in Vancouver, according to Bartels.

The goal is to raise $300 million for the capital project and $50 million for the operating endowment from public and private sources.

"We have started the funding request process with the federal government and we are optimistic that they will be a partner in this project," says Bartels. "Meanwhile, we aim to raise significant private support to demonstrate to government the unprecedented generosity of the community."

Public consultation is a big part of the project. The gallery has engaged with the public through surveys, focus groups and public engagements to gauge the Vancouverites' values and interests for the new gallery.

"Our priority is ensuring we consult and engage stakeholders while also meeting our timeline to finalize the design and start construction next year," she says.

Last September, the gallery revealed the proposed design for its new building, created by Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron. The firm's design portfolio includes the Tate Modern in London and the National Stadium in Beijing, also known as Bird's Nest Stadium.

Hub provides missing link in Vancouver's tech sector

When Vancouver startups get together, the hive mind is greater than the sum of its parts.

The proof: Launch Academy. The tech startup incubator opened their first office in 2012 with 12 desks to share with fellow entrepreneurs.

Since then, the company has moved into a 12,000-square foot space in Gastown, and fostered more than 1,000 entrepreneurs as they launched more than 400 companies, raising more than $85 million in investment.

"I like to think that Launch Academy has galvanized the tech industry," says co-founder and tech entrepreneur Ray Walia. "One of the reasons we started was that things were very fragmented. There were different pockets [of the tech industry] that you could reach into, but unless you knew about them, you would have trouble navigating your way through."

Launch Academy became the connector for many entrepreneurs, uniting tech start-ups that were working in areas including social media, telecommunications, the Internet of Things and financial tech.

Now, the academy provides free educational resources as well as more in-depth, hands-on paid programs that help entrepreneurs understand the process of building a company, with a focus on the lean methodology.

"We really want to help people understand what it takes to be an entrepreneur," says Walia. "It really it boils down to being able to identify all the resources that you need, but also putting yourself on the right path to success. There are a lot of different pitfalls and challenges that come with being an entrepreneur, and in particular a first-time entrepreneur, that we want to help you avoid."

The Launchpad is the company's office environment where the tech start-ups work, collaborate and get structured guidance and mentorship.

"We see this facility as being for entrepreneurs, by entrepreneurs. Everybody that runs the facility is building a company themselves," says Walia. He and his co-founders work in the space alongside first-time entrepreneurs. About 100 to 200 people share the space at any given time.

"You get this collective hive of experience, education and camaraderie," says Walia. "Some of the biggest value is being next to your peers. They can even help you prevent a failure or a mistake because they just went through it themselves."

The organization is helping local companies build bridges to world tech hubs, particularly San Francisco, where they can continue to grow their companies.

"There is no, 'This is Silicon Valley North,'" says Walia. "This is Vancouver. There are a lot of different things that we can be known for and that we are known for, but you can't kid yourself that San Francisco has a major role to play in tech, and so how do you connect with it?"

This week, on June 22 and 23, the organization brought together more than 30 tech leaders, most from Silicon Valley, for their second annual Traction Conference in Vancouver. The focus is to provide entrepreneurs with current, practical insights they can use to grow their businesses.

A strong network benefits everyone who's building a business, whether they're experienced or first-timers.

"Every single time it is a very difficult journey," says Walia. "Having the right type of resources around you, the right type of mentors, advisors, support network, is critical."

STEPHANIE ORFORD

Launch Academy opened their first office in 2012 with 12 desks to share with fellow entrepreneurs. Since then, the company has moved into a 12,000-square-foot space in Gastown. CONTRIBUTED

Smart Bikes for smart transit

Mobi bikes can be activated and unlocked from a docking station through the bike or payment kiosk. CONTRIBUTED

Jason Menard

Getting around town in an environmentally sensitive way? The wheels are already in motion — two wheels at a time, thanks to Vancouver's Mobi bike share system.

"In addition to providing people with a healthy transportation option, public bike share systems can help extend the reach of transit and walking trips, reduce the need for personal vehicle trips, trigger greater interest in cycling and increase cycling ridership," explained Jerry Dobrovolny, general manager of engineering services, City of Vancouver. "A public bike share system aligns with the City's Transportation 2040 Plan and the Greenest City Action Plan objectives of making cycling a viable, sustainable transportation option."

Vancouver Bike Share Inc., a local subsidiary of CycleHop, manages the program in Vancouver, contracted by the City. And Smoove supplies the technology — including bikes, stations and payment methods.

"Vancouver's Mobi bikes are 'Smart Bikes' and can be activated and unlocked from a docking station through an interface on the bike or through a payment kiosk, making them an easy and convenient option for short trips," Dobrovolny explained. "This technology also gives us the ability to be more flexible about the location, size and relocation of the docking stations, based on demand."

At the moment, they're expecting demand will be served by the initial installation of bikes and service locations, but they will be watching the program closely to see where opportunities may arise.

"We are currently working with CycleHop to finalize locations for the bike share docking stations and within a few weeks the first bikes will be available for use," he said. "By the end of summer 2016, the plan is to have 1,500 bicycles available at 150 stations.

"We are not making any commitments at this time about expansion beyond the initial service area [which includes the Downtown Peninsula, bounded by Arbutus Street, 16th Avenue, and Main Street], but that is definitely something that CycleHop has expressed interest in."

This bike-sharing program is just one way that the city is trying to reach the goals outlined in its Transportation 2040 plan.

"The City has been working to bring public bike share to fruition for many years. This is a joint effort with CycleHop and we're very pleased to be so close to launching a public bike share system in Vancouver," Dobrovolny said. "The City's Transportation 2040 Plan includes a number of goals and targets related to alternative modes of transportation — examples include land use to support shorter trips and sustainable transportation choices; making walking safe, convenient, comfortable and delightful; and making cycling safe, convenient, comfortable and fun for people of all ages and abilities."

Mobi is expected to work because the city has already shown that it embraces bicycle culture.

"Vancouver is a city that is ideally suited for bike share because we already have a strong cycling culture, and the City has been working to put more infrastructure in place [for example: greenways, more bicycle lanes, etc.] to support increased cycling," he said. "And we're seeing results — overall, we have seen a continued year-over-year increase in the use of Vancouver bike lanes as more residents adapt to cycling."

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What's trending on the dining scene

FOODIE FILES

Buzz-worthy food and drink trends to try in 2016

Jessica Napier

Poke
Move over ceviche, there's a new raw fish dish in town. Hawaiian-inspired poke bowls are loaded with fleshy chunks of fresh fish and colourful toppings, making them an Instagram-worthy snack full with nutrients. Husband and wife team Jak and Angela Quan will be opening their own build-your-own poke restaurant in a secret location in Vancouver this summer.

"Poke comes with a great history from Hawaii," says Jak. "For us, every bite takes us back to the island, and we're hoping to share that experience with everyone in Vancouver." At The Poke Guy, guests will be able to select their preferred base (white or brown rice, or salad greens), plus a variety of protein and veggie add-ons."We'll have both seafood, and vegetarian options, mixed in with a choice of sauces — from a simple sea salt, to shoyu, to spicy wasabi and more — and toppings such as avocado, onions, cucumbers, chili peppers, mango, seaweed, crab meat and tobiko," Angela explains.

Organic Wines
Savvy oenophiles have been sipping organic wine for years, and now all-natural vinos are starting to spill over into the mainstream.

"Organic wines are made with organically or bio-dynamically grown grapes, fermented by indigenous yeasts, and with no fining agents, heavy filtration or flavour adjustments," explains Royal Dinette sommelier Paul McCloskey. Not only are organic wines lower in sulphites (which can contribute to those day-after headaches), they also boast a superior flavour. "There's arguably a purer expression of the grape and the land when wines are allowed to just do their thing," McCloskey notes. One of his personal picks is the certified-organic Chateau Lestignac 'Callipyge' (2014) from France. "It's a smooth and structured wine that combines the flavours of ripe strawberries and spices," he says.

Artisanal Ice Cream
Plain old vanilla might be a perennial favourite, but Vancouver's innovative ice cream parlours are getting creative with bold flavours and exciting new techniques. Yaletown's Nice Vice is a dairy-free micro-creamy serving plant-based ice cream made without soy, GMOs, allergens or cholesterol.

These healthful frozen treats have a sweet potato and coconut milk base and are available in guilt-free seasonal flavours like watermelon hibiscus and blueberry ginger. Meanwhile, liquid nitrogen ice cream shop Mister is giving new meaning to the words "brain freeze" in its science lab inspired space. Seriously smooth scoops of crème brûlée, avocado, and dark chocolate are made to order on the spot using -196-degree liquid nitrogen.

Healthy Fast Food
Lunch-hour never looked so good thanks to a new crop of gourmet to-go spots in the downtown core. In the Marine Building, cafeteria-style eatery Tractor lets diners mix and match a variety of colourful pre-made salads that range from arugula and grilled pears to roasted beets with green beans. Over on Dunsmuir, Field and Social attracts daily lineups thanks to its curated menu of signature salads.

"We really wanted to change the way people think about salads," explains co-founder Stephen Collins. The elevated fast-casual spot inside the former Labour Temple building features a clean, Scandinavian-inspired design that incorporates elements from the 100-year-old heritage building.

AMERICAS MASTERS GAMES

Come for the sport, stay for the tourism

Big sporting events are a natural match for Vancouver, and their influence is shaping the city's tourism industry, its buildings and its people.

"Sport hosting is becoming more and more of a priority for various partners around the city," says Thomas Jones, event director for the inaugural Americas Masters Games, which will be held in Vancouver from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4. "Typically when people come to these games, you come for the sport, but you stay for the tourism."

Vancouver's world-class venues made the city a natural choice for the games, says Jones. The competition is put on by Sport BC with community partners including the City of Vancouver, BC Pavilion Corporation, Tourism Vancouver and the Vancouver Hotel Destination Association.

The festival will host an estimated 7,000 athletes from more than 30 countries, ages 30 and up to compete in 23 sports, including volleyball, ice hockey, swimming, table tennis, triathlon and many others, clustered in locations across the city.

The courses for some of the competitions read like a tourist's must-see list. The courses for cyclists include Cypress Mountain, the UBC Endowment Lands and Spanish Banks.

"Vancouver's known as a hosting town," Jones says. But the appeal goes way beyond the competition locations. "The airport, the transit system, all we know as locals and take for granted is really word class."

These draws have attracted other major sporting events to Vancouver recently with great success, including the World Rugby Sevens Series, the FIFA Women's World Cup and the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Visitors won't just be coming here for the sports. They're here for the full Vancouver package, says Jones.

"It won't just be athletes coming here. It'll be families with their kids. We've had a fair bit of interest from people wanting to do things like cruises afterwards," says Jones. "Sports have a really positive impact on the city."

Vancouver's outdoorsy brand was a perfect fit for the Americas Masters Games, says Charmaine Crooks, Olympic silver medalist in track and field and one of the athlete ambassadors for the Americas Masters Games.

"We're a very active city. People are into active lifestyles and here's a way for people who want to compete in a fun friendly atmosphere," she says.

Some of the competitors travel the world competing in their sports, some are former professional athletes, and many others are amateurs who just love playing sports in their community.

"There's going to be some good competition, but there's also people who are just going to be doing it for fun," says Crooks. STEPHANIE ORFORD

The inaugural Americas Masters Games will be held in Vancouver from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4. EMILY JACKSON

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Grouse Mountain sees approximately 1.3 million annual visitors. Inset: Capilano Suspension Bridge and English Bay Beach at sunset. CONTRIBUTED

Ready, set, summer tourism

MAJESTIC

Vancouver's tourism industry heats up for 2016

Jessica Napier

With its majestic natural surroundings, world-class restaurants and energetic cultural festivals, Vancouver offers visitors the perfect mix of urban excitement and outdoor adventures.

The Lower Mainland's most popular travel destination attracted more than nine million overnight visitors in 2015 and expects to beat that record-breaking number again this year. "Vancouver's tourism industry supports more than 66,000 jobs, contributes approximately $1.6 billion in taxes and brings in approximately $3.5 billion in direct visitor spending," explained Sonu Purhar, communications manager at Tourism Vancouver.

Stanley Park, Granville Island, False Creek and the city's sandy beaches are just a few of the must-see outdoor attractions for summertime tourists — all of which can be accessed from the pedestrianized Seawall. Spanning the shoreline from downtown to Kitsilano, the 22-kilometre Seawall is best explored on two wheels, which will be even easier this summer thanks to the city's new bike and scooter-sharing programs.

"Locals and visitors will have the opportunity to zip between neighbourhoods on Saturna Green System's electric scooters, or peddle the bike lanes with a new public bike share program," said Purhar.

Fitness enthusiasts of all skill levels travel to Vancouver throughout the year for biking events, dragon boat competitions, marathons and more. From Aug. 26 to Sept. 4, the city will host the inaugural Americas Masters Games — a nine-day event designed to complement the World Masters Games.

Thousands of amateur and professional athletes will be participating in 24 different events — archery, judo and volleyball to name just a few — at venues across the city.

Those looking to stretch their legs and breathe some fresh mountain air can take a quick trip across the Lion's Gate Bridge to the North Shore, where Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, Lynn Canyon and Grouse Mountain are all ideal venues for scenic hiking and ecological explorations.

Offering breathtaking views of the city below and a range of activities for all ages, Grouse Mountain sees approximately 1.3 million annual visitors. For the 2016 season, the mountaintop resort is celebrating The Summer of Flight with a series of aerial-themed activities on offer in July and August.

"From tandem paragliding to zip line adventures to helicopter tours over the North Shore, a wide variety of airborne adventure awaits our visitors this summer," said communications manager Julia Grant. Home to North America's longest aerial tramway, Grouse Mountain is also launching a brand new flying-inspired activity in summer 2016: the Skyride Surf Adventure.

"Daring sightseers will have the opportunity to ride up the mountain while taking in stunning 360-degree views from a secure platform on the roof of the tram cabin," said Grant.

And even on rainy days, Vancouver has plenty of indoor options to keep visitors entertained, and dry. Tourists can take cover from the wet weather while shopping for designer fashions in the newly expanded Pacific Centre Mall, or immerse themselves in First Nations culture at the Museum of Anthropology.

Meanwhile, culture vultures will be delighted by numerous art exhibitions, festivals and stage performances; highlights for summer 2016 include the Vancouver Art Gallery's new Picasso exhibit and Broadway Across Canada's productions of Newsies and Book of Mormon.

BEER TOURISM

Yeastvan and beyond

There's never been a better time to drink beer in this city. A bevy of new breweries are opening in the Lower Mainland, and brewery tours are gaining traction along with them. Tours provide one of the best ways to taste a variety of beers at once, says David Perry, president of the Vancouver chapter of CAMRA, a craft beer consumer group. Here are a few ways to get a taste of the local beer scene.

Vancouver Brewery Tours
Join this tour group's weekly public tour or book a private tour for your posse. They hold public tours on foot and via shuttle, and some also include a meal.

"What makes them special is they have a great relationship with the breweries," says Perry. "You really do get an immersive, community feel."

Vine and Hops
Take their weekly public brewery tour in Vancouver, featuring three local breweries, or sign up for the long haul with a six-hour tour of four Fraser Valley wineries.

The company specializes in curating private tours, says Perry. "They try to accommodate what you really want out of the tour. They ask what you are looking to do and build you more of a custom feel," he says.

See the new brewery row
Find a designated driver and head out to Murray Street in Port Moody, near Rocky Point Park. The street is home to four new breweries: Yellow Dog Brewing, Moody Ales, Twin Sails Brewing and just-opened The Parkside Brewery.

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